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# Inquiry Based Art Research and the Development of Artistic Autonomy in the High School Setting

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2017

MATTHEW CRAWFORD

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greely, Colorado

The Graduate School

INQUIRY BASED ART RESEARCH AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARTISTIC  
AUTONOMY IN THE HIGH SCHOOL SETTING.

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

Matthew Crawford

College of Performing and Visual Arts  
School of Art and Design

August 2017

This Action-Research by: Matthew Crawford

Entitled: *Inquiry Based Art Research and the Development of Artistic Autonomy in the High School Setting.*

Has been approved as meeting the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in College of Performing and Visual Arts in School of Art and Design, Program of Art and Design.

Accepted by the Committee:

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Connie K. Stewart, Ph.D. Chair

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Donna Goodwin, Ph.D. Co-Chair

## **ABSTRACT**

Crawford, Matthew. *Inquiry Based Art Research and the Development of Artistic Autonomy in the High School Setting*. Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Northern Colorado, 2017.

This action research study was implemented to determine if conducting arts-based research as a part of the curriculum in my Drawing 2 class would result in more autonomous art by students. The research was ran throughout a twelve-week period during the Spring Semester of 2017. The research documented the work of four students through three separate units. The data collected was from students' workbooks where they documented their process in five components for each unit. Students' final artwork was also a part of the data collection. This study showed how shifting from a traditional teacher-centered curriculum to a student-centered one can foster authentic learning.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **RATIONALE**

I am one of four art teachers at the high school I've been working at for nine years. During my tenure in the same district I have had the opportunity to teach at three of the four high schools, teaching every subject in art our district offers. Currently I am the drawing and painting teacher. This position is one that I coveted in my previous years because these media are the ones I practice most outside of work. It also comes with a legacy of sorts, built by the previous drawing and painting teacher. The inherited legacy was one of the driving forces behind this study examining my teaching and its benefits to my students.

I have felt that in some art programs that product is valued over process. While it is important that students are able to see success in the final product they create, my instructional goal is for students to understand the processes and skills an artist uses to be successful. If students understand how to generate ideas and research that they find interesting they will have the skills to make worthwhile art. The mastery over media and maturity of thought will come as they continue to create. Jo Alice Leeds (1986) wrote about the reasons students make art and how this fundamental need to express themselves is more important than teaching students to master media and techniques. Leeds paraphrased Robert Henri's thoughts on teaching art, "Henri advised his students to master as completely as

possible a knowledge of their materials, drawing, color, and the principles of composition, but only and always in a living relationship to ideas they wanted to express” (Leeds, 1986, p. 21).

The semester before I began a master’s degree program in art education I began changing my curriculum to see if the new approach would align my curriculum with my own personal priorities in teaching. The most important change I wanted to make was to instill more student ownership in their art making. I wanted to move towards a student-centered classroom creating more autonomy in the making process for my students. I researched IB Art Workbooks and decided this would be a model I would use in my investigation into a student-focused learning environment. The timing of my decision to investigate my own values, put those ideas in to practice, and begin graduate school could not have been better. One of the theoretical stances of my graduate program is exactly what I wanted to investigate, framing art as research.

I began introducing my version of the IB Art workbook format in my upper level classes the semester before I began my advanced studies. While the workbooks did have some success with students I felt the students were too often simply going through the motions to please the teacher. A sense of engagement by my students and by myself was lacking. Neither of us was fully invested in the merits of research as art.

In my first semester of graduate school I read an article by Julia Marshall (2014) *Art Practice as Research in the Classroom*, which gave me words to frame my values and subsequent questions as an art teacher. Marshall summarized my thoughts when she wrote, “Ultimately, students come to understand themselves as

artists with their own interests and ways of thinking. This perception gives them the motivation and license to work autonomously, and governs their own learning and growth” (Marshall, 2011, p. 18). I knew immediately that this is exactly what I wanted to pursue as my action research project. All the merits and reasoning behind using research workbooks in an art class were laid out in this article. “The arts-based research model borrows from three approaches to learning and pedagogy that are already familiar to educators: experiential learning, inquiry-based learning, and project-based learning” (Marshall, 2011, p. 14). These resources gave me a sense of direction for my investigation into what I valued as an art teacher and to turn those thoughts into actions.

### **Background/Context**

The research I conducted took place in my upper level art classes second semester at a High School in Northern Colorado. The classes included two Drawing 2 classes. These are stacked classes, which include Drawing 3 students. The school district I teach in is predominantly white, substantially higher than the state average of ethnic diversity, and middle class. The school is fairly large with roughly 1800 students from ninth to twelfth grade. We are also the Advanced Placement (AP) school in our district and have a reputation for being a very strong art program.

### **Research Question**

The question for this action research project is to explore how pedagogical practices utilizing arts-based research can be integrated into my curriculum and if that shift will generate more student autonomy in their art making process. I will

investigate how including student research, and the documentation of that research, changes the setting in my classroom from being teacher-centered to a more learner-centered environment. Are students more engaged in their own learning and more willing to experiment with their artistic choices? This research includes a reflection on how I present and facilitate research approaches and how students accept the idea of research in class.

### **Definition of Terms**

#### **International Baccalaureate (IB)**

“Founded in 1968, the International Baccalaureate® is a non-profit educational foundation offering four highly respected programs of international education that develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills needed to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world” (International Baccalaureate, 2016a, p. 1).

#### **Advanced Placement (AP)**

AP is a program, which offers college level courses to high school students. Students enrolled in AP courses have the option to take an AP exam at the end of the course. Receiving a high score on the exam allows students to receive college credit at participating universities. In order to be considered an AP School, all AP curriculums must be approved by the College Board (<https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/>).

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITURATURE REVIEW**

The main purpose behind my study coincides with the overriding question I have about my practice as an art educator. How can I help my students think critically about subjects and create original meaningful art? In my experience most art teachers are concerned with the authenticity of student artwork and in a perfect classroom , all students would be self-motivated to tell their own stories or develop deeper understanding of ideas through their personal art making. My goal is to better understand the theory and practice of inquiry and learn how to help students investigate ideas and create art based on their investigations. Essentially, I wish for my high school students to generate new knowledge through arts-based action research so they may discover a process of investigation that leads them to new understandings and personal discovery through art making. The process is a cycle of reflection and revision to ideas, techniques, and approaches to making art. Although the focus of my study is on the art created from research, the two cannot be separated.

#### **Student as Choice-Maker**

Too often the art projects and lessons I present to my students become prescribed antidotes to fulfilling the requirements of art standards, rubrics, and

instructions on how to produce something that is already predetermined. By guiding students through arts-based research techniques and the documentation of discovery students will have the opportunity to express the learning they have gained through original works of their creation. Olivia Gude (2013) writes about directed art projects and how this often becomes a predetermined outcome for many students who produce work based on teacher instruction and expectations.

School art does not inevitably signify educational art activities that are inauthentic and rule-bound. New school art styles can be developed that skillfully and creatively utilize available materials, tools, technologies, critical theories and contexts to introduce students to a wide range of developmentally appropriate aesthetic practice. (Gude, 2013, p. 7)

While project-based education is what I practice in my classroom and has many benefits to learning the projects are all too often exercises in following instruction. In project-based learning students work to solve problems that are curriculum based and often interdisciplinary. This approach to art education fits the Western canon of lesson planning as explained by Rufo (2011) in his article about student agency in the classroom. Rufo describes the Western approach in the classroom as a matter of who has the power. Traditionally this has been the role of teacher as the authority that too often creates lessons set to prescribed outcomes. The focus is often on realistic art that can discourage some students, leaving them less engaged in the art making process when the expected outcome is beyond their ability. Who has the power in the art room also determines what the satisfactory outcome of production will be. Efland (1976) writes about art in schools as an institutional form of art. He makes a distinction between *school art* and *child art*. Efland states that school art is the symbolic artifacts generated from lessons created

by the art teacher and child art as “a spontaneous, unsupervised form of graphic expression...” (Efland, 1976, pp. 37-38). The power the teacher holds in traditional art instruction is beyond lesson planning and outcomes; it is also reflected in the management of materials in the studio. Teachers are often budget minded and limit the use of materials out of necessity, but Rufo argues by “giving up arbitrary control over creativity in the classroom allowed children to have ownership of their own creativity” (p. 22).

Buffington (2014) also discussed the power dynamics in the classroom and gave an example of how art teachers can change the role of students in the classroom by using a student-centered approach that helps students make meaningful connections and promote further learning. Buffington’s example was that of a lesson led by a student teacher discussing the role of power in a contemporary artist’s work. Students led the discussion with relevant examples of power in their lives. When it came time for the art making section of the lesson, the lesson quickly shifted to the teacher becoming the authority. Buffington observed that the students became less engaged when the power shifted away from them. She argues that engaging students in relevant lessons “...require that an art teacher relinquish some of the power in a classroom and create assignments that allow for more student agency and student-centered learning” (p. 10).

### **Theory and Practice**

In this study, theory and practice come together in the form of two products students will produce in the classroom. The first is the visual journal or investigative workbook students will create based on research requirements loosely generated from the International Baccalaureate Art programs workbook guidelines (ibo.org.,



2016). The other will be an artwork created directly from the inquiry into a topic and documented in the visual journal. Marshall (2011) gives an example of how Kimberley D'Amado integrated arts-based research into her classroom in much the same manner I intend to do so. "Building on the IB approach, D'Amado was able to develop a full arts-based research model complete with teaching strategies and models of inquiry in which student artist/researchers learn about and practice arts-based research" (Marshall, 2011, p. 14). I am interested in how student inquiry and subsequent process of documenting the inquiry into subjects may enhance students' engagement and creation of artworks.

Marshall also speaks about how arts-based research transforms the research process in profound ways. "Notably, it highlights and extends the research process, and opens up these processes to include creative, non-verbal ways of understanding a subject" (Marshall, 2011, p. 12). What I am interested in is the new knowledge and transformative thought students can achieve when inquiring into a subject whether that subject is teacher-generated or student-generated.

### **Arts-Based Research Journals**

The use of sketchbooks in art education has been a tradition for some time. However the revision of their use and how they can be employed as an integral part of research has many new approaches being brought forward. Sanders-Bustle (2008) intended her visual artifact journal assignment, she created for her students' journals, to be the catalyst to creative thought and allow the freedom to explore visual study without rigid constraints in approach:

The use of sketchbooks, journals, and reflective writing in art education is nothing new. Yet, a contemporary shift from a modernist to a postmodern

paradigm challenges educators to revisit and revise practices to include experiences that are not solely about formal content and the development of art skills but those which cross disciplinary boundaries, encourage conceptual development, and foster creative and critical inquiry, all within the context of an ever-changing contemporary world. (Sanders-Bustle, 2008, p. 9)

One of the challenges of using sketchbooks as a tool to conduct arts-based research is the disparity of their use and engagement by students. My experience with the use of sketchbooks has shown me the wide variations in students' approach to sketchbooks. While some students relish the chance to fill pages in a sketchbook with creative images and text, some students are reluctant to mess up a blank white page. Gilbert (1998) addresses these challenges in working with future educators in a university setting. By using sketchbooks as a tool to conduct research, future educators were shown how a sketchbook could be used to conduct research in not only art classes, but across the curriculum. Gilbert's solution to the varying degree in which students' worked in their sketchbooks was to create a clear criteria for students to follow, "once students were clear about what they were aiming for they felt confident to take risks" (p. 257). In addition to taking more risks students gain the confidence to engage in research and develop ideas further.

I also find challenges in including all levels of student ability in the classroom. I wish to capture students who may not feel comfortable or skilled enough to work in a visual journal or create final artworks initiated by their own investigation. The challenge comes from employing enough variety in journaling to allow all students to choose ways to record their research process. I hope to engage students and motivate the journaling process by exploring different journaling techniques similar to the ones in Scott's book *The Journal Junkies Workshop*.

Scott (2010) lays out various techniques and approaches to journaling with a philosophy that aligns with what I am attempting to accomplish.

The visual journal combines the visual with the written, the image with the word. You do not need to identify yourself as an artist to keep a visual journal. All you need is the desire to explore your creativity and your inner world to try something new. The visual journal becomes a rich and layered record of your life that uses words, colors, images and more. The journal becomes whatever it needs to be. (Scott, 2010, p. 14)

By allowing students to record and document their findings from research in ways appealing to each individual, I hope that freedom translates in the willingness to explore ways of visual communication. I intend to assess students on the documentation process as opposed to skill level and mastery of technique in their sketchbooks. By informing students of my intentions I wish to alleviate concerns students may have about making “good” art and allowing students to simply explore.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

#### **Design**

The purpose of this action research was to explore how high school students' inquiry based research can generate more autonomy in students' art making process. I employed the action research methodology to give me a better insight into my practice. Buffington defines action research as "the study and enhancement of one's own practice" (Buffington, 2013, p. 38). By using a pre-existing model of research-based workbooks in advanced level high school art classes, I investigated the theory and practice of students' acquisition of knowledge through autonomous artistic practice. In doing this research, my advanced level art classes shifted from a traditionally teacher-centered curriculum to one that is more student-driven. The investigation I pursued asked whether students will be more engaged in their own learning and be more willing to experiment with their own ideas as a result of participating in arts-based research. This project includes reflection on how I present and facilitate research approaches and how students accept the idea of research in an art class. The other part of the study determined how invested students have become in their own artistic process. This is evident in their research workbooks as well as the resulting artwork generated from their research.

## Procedure

I conducted the research during the second semester, 2016-17 school year in my upper level drawing classes. Data collection began with student surveys and continued throughout the semester. There were five units during the second semester and I collected data at the end of each unit. The data collected were (a) a student survey given at the beginning of the semester (b) photographs of student workbooks (c) photographs of student artwork, and (d) a student survey given at the end of the semester. All photographs were taken during regular class time as standard practice by the teacher/researcher.

The surveys were given twice during the semester to all students, regardless of participation in my study, in the upper level drawing classes. The first survey was given during the first week of the semester. To determine how students perceive research and its role in the development of art the following questions were asked on the survey:

1. How do visual artists come up with ideas for their artwork?
2. Where do artists look for inspiration?
3. How do artists turn an idea into a piece of art?
4. Why do artists keep sketchbooks?

To allow me to compare students' perception of research, the second survey was given at the end of the semester with the same questions. The comparison between responses of pre and post surveys was analyzed to determine a change in student perception towards inquiry as form of practice into their own art making and that of other artists.

Photographs of participating student workbooks were taken at the end of each unit in addition to regular grading of assignments. Photos of final projects are routinely used for assessment but photos of workbooks have not been used for assessment previously. Photos of student workbooks are not a part of normal assessment.

There are five parts to the workbook for each unit covered in class and each part has a designated page.

1. Introduction Page: students will introduce the theme for the unit here and expand upon their initial thoughts about the assignment
2. Brainstorming Page: students will generate ideas through different brainstorming activities based on the topic of each unit
3. Research Page: students will investigate artists and other sources to enrich their idea for their art works.
4. Experiment Page: students will experiment with media and techniques they wish to employ for their final art project for the unit.
5. Reflection Page: students will reflect on their final artwork and the process of research.

The workbooks were assessed to determine the depth of investigation and development of original ideas for the final artwork. All students' final artwork for each unit was photographed as routine practice for assessment. Only students who participated in the study were used for my data collection as a part of my research.

The visual journals were constructed of five parts designed to help guide students through the research and documentation process as well as help them generate ideas to use as images for their final artwork.

The five parts of the journal students created for each unit were Introduction Page, Brainstorming Page, Artist Research, Experimentation, and Reflection Page. There were criteria for each page for students to meet, but I left enough ambiguity in the criteria to allow students to pursue a form of documentation they were comfortable with.

For each unit during the semester, I adopted Marshal's (2014) format of inquiry based upon her description of Creative Conceptual Strategies.

**Transformative strategies:**

1. Change Scale: Make an object or image larger or smaller.
2. Reinterpret: Change the style in which an image is rendered.
3. Construct in an unusual medium: Construct an object out of surprising materials.
4. Translate: Transform something into a different mode, code, or language.

**Combinatory strategies:**

1. Hybridize: Mix and replace parts of two or more entities.
2. Synthesize: Combine multiple things.

**Juxtapose strategies:**

1. Re-contextualize: Change the context of an object, idea, or image.
2. Collage/juxtapose: Juxtapose imagery to develop or reveal a concept that unites them.
3. Assemble: Place objects adjacent to each other to develop and reveal a concept that unites them.
4. Layer: Superimpose an image onto another image or form.
5. Appropriate: Use an existing image or style to draw upon its inherent meaning.

**Extension strategies:**

1. Extend: Take images and ideas to logical or absurd conclusions or into fiction and fantasy.
2. Elaborate: take an idea or image further, add on to it, spin it, or take it to the absurd.
3. Project: Imagine, speculate, or envision what could come next.

**Associative strategies:**

1. Use visual analogy: Compare one thing to another.
2. Use metaphor: Cast one thing as another.
3. Substitute: Replace something with something similar or very different.

Students were allowed to choose one or more sub-strategies to use for their project. Each unit had a theme, topic, or big idea generated by the teacher.

Students were then guided through the six components of the unit. The first five components were the inquiry into the chosen subject in the students' workbooks and the final component was the students' final artwork created as a result of the arts-based research documented in the workbook.

One of my major considerations for this study was the process of how I developed research strategies and posed questions to my students about their inquiry. I felt the questions I posed to students about the research they would conduct required the most attention to get students engaged early and to develop a clear sense of direction for my students. Marshall (2014) wrote on developing guidelines for inquiry, "This entails developing generative questions, supplying tools for inquiry, prompting learners to explore a topic and choose a creative strategy to illuminate or put a twist on what has been learned about the topic" (Marshall, 2014, 169). The overarching goal is to help students engage in techniques to critically think about topics they are interested in and develop strategies for creating meaningful art.

### **Data Analysis**

The documentation of research techniques was examined at the end of the semester. I examined the depth and acquisition of knowledge students recorded in their visual journals and how they applied that information to their art making. I also examined the pre and post survey responses. I looked for similarities and differences in the students' responses from both surveys. Student artwork was examined to determine if conducting research helped generate original student-centered art.



I was looking for evidence of growth in understanding how research can help artists generate new ideas and expand existing ideas further. The evidence I was hoping to see was deeper inquiry into subjects and evidence of expanding ideas from the initial brainstorming exercise. I also kept a field journal to help enrich the context of the data I collected and add to the meaning of my findings.

### **Participants**

After receiving approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Northern Colorado, participants for my study were selected from a pool of students who returned signed permission forms. I selected four students in the advanced drawing class range in grade level from ninth to twelfth grade. The advanced level drawing course is an elective course and students are required to have taken Drawing 1 as a prerequisite before taking the advanced drawing course. I selected the four students based on their academic history to help provide a wide range of students. I chose each student to represent three levels of historical academic achievement based upon the students grading trend. The chosen levels of academic performance reflect a high-level of historical academic achievement, mid-level achievement, and low-level achievement.

Student	Grade	Historic academic performance and brief description of personality traits observed by the researcher
CH	12	CH is an average academic achiever. CH is a bright

		and pleasant girl. She is quiet yet unafraid to speak her mind.
JR	11	JR is a historically low academic achiever. He is bright and passionate, although uninformed, about subjects he is interested in. JR is a pleasant student, always respectful and considerate. JR is also very stubborn and passive aggressive at times.
KS	10	KS is above average academically. He excels in the subjects he is interested in and is average in the classes he is not interested in. Socializing in class is one of KS's favorite pass times, but he always puts forth his best effort and thought in each unit.
TS	9	TS is a high academic achiever. Her average letter grade from middle school is an A. She dedicates significant time and energy into all her schoolwork and has a dry, quirky sense of humor.

**Table 1.** Student Participant Information

Students generated all data collected as a part of regular classroom practice.

### **Limitations**

Certainly there were many limitations to my study. The first limitation was the number of participants in the study and random selection of those participants. I did not receive as many permission forms to participate in the study as I had

anticipated. Many students simply forgot to return the forms in time to participate in the study. Due to the small pool of students I had to purposely select students rather than select them randomly. I selected four students to participate in my study, but I believe moving forward a larger sample from different classes would be beneficial. The second limitation I observed was how I presented and taught strategies and methods of research. I had limited experience teaching research processes and this could have had a significant impact on how students engaged in the research part of the curriculum. The third limitation was the limited resources available to students to conduct research. Students have limited access to a computer lab and were not always able to access resources. Time was the fourth limitation on this study. Each unit had a time frame for completion and some students did not complete projects due to time management issues. The time frame also limited the scope of work students were able to complete.

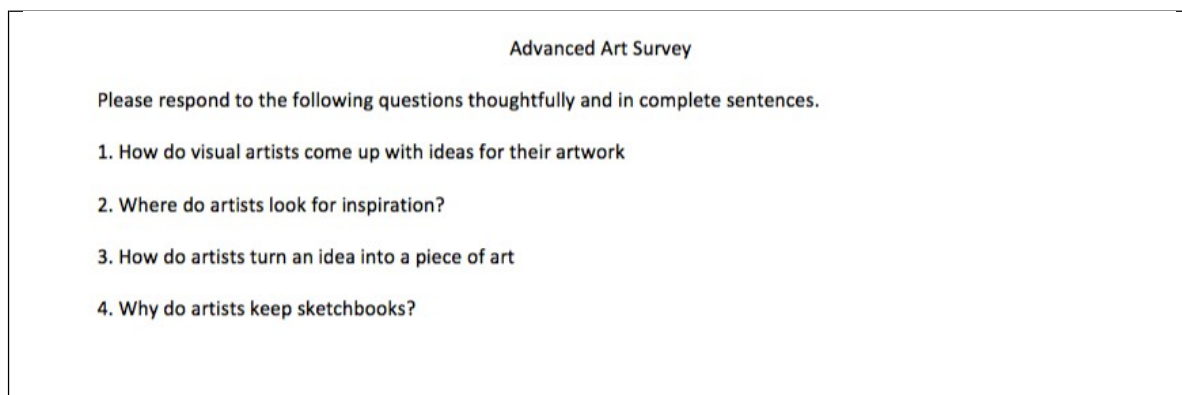
## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS

The data gathered for analysis were collected from three projects during the semester as well as pre and post surveys given at the beginning and end of the semester. I chose to analyze data in chronological order to help see trends that may have developed in student perceptions of research and understanding of teacher expectations. I was hoping to find trends that showed students understood the role of research in art and that they were making autonomous artwork.

#### **Pre-Advanced Art Survey**

The survey was given to students at the beginning of the semester to gain an understanding of students' perceptions towards how artists generated ideas for artworks (see Figure 1).

The image shows a screenshot of a survey form titled "Advanced Art Survey". The form is enclosed in a rectangular border. At the top, the title "Advanced Art Survey" is centered. Below the title, there is a line of text: "Please respond to the following questions thoughtfully and in complete sentences." This is followed by a numbered list of four questions:

1. How do visual artists come up with ideas for their artwork
2. Where do artists look for inspiration?
3. How do artists turn an idea into a piece of art
4. Why do artists keep sketchbooks?

*Figure 1. Pre-Advanced Art Survey.*

Questions one and two were intentionally similar to see how students would respond to the same question phrased differently. I was looking to see if students

made connections between the content of art and their lives. For questions one and two, R.W. wrote that artists look at objects and try to figure out how to make that object(s) more than what the original was. T.S. responded by noting artist get ideas by simply being alive and everything is an inspiration. K.S. wrote that artists get ideas from their surroundings and the Internet. C.H. responded that artists use their experiences to create perspectives.

Question three was designed to determine the extent of students' knowledge of the artistic process. For question three, R.W. responded to working on the final artwork and determining how to place elements of the image together. T.S. wrote that the work comes directly from the imagination to final artwork. K.S.'s response was similar to T.S. in that it went directly to final product from imagination. C.H. stated it was a matter of talent to turn an idea into art.

Question four asks why artists keep sketchbooks and the responses were all very similar. R.W. wrote artists sketch their surroundings. T.S. said it was to catch ideas and thoughts. K.S.'s response elaborated more adding it was a place to practice and improve. C.H. spoke about sudden inspirations.

### **Project One: Workbook**

At the beginning of each unit I presented students with an introductory presentation about the project. During the presentation students were asked to take notes and paraphrase or summarize the project in their workbooks. They were also asked to sketch out any ideas they had about the project or sketch thoughts about their understanding of the presentation. To help students with the formatting of the Introduction Page, I asked students to balance the page between half writing and

half imagery. The work students did for the introduction would be their *Introduction Page* in their workbook.

For their very first Introduction Page both KS and TS wrote very minimally, simply restating the basic facts of the project. They did not elaborate with any of their own interpretations of the project and created sparse sketches of ideas about the unit (see Figure 2).

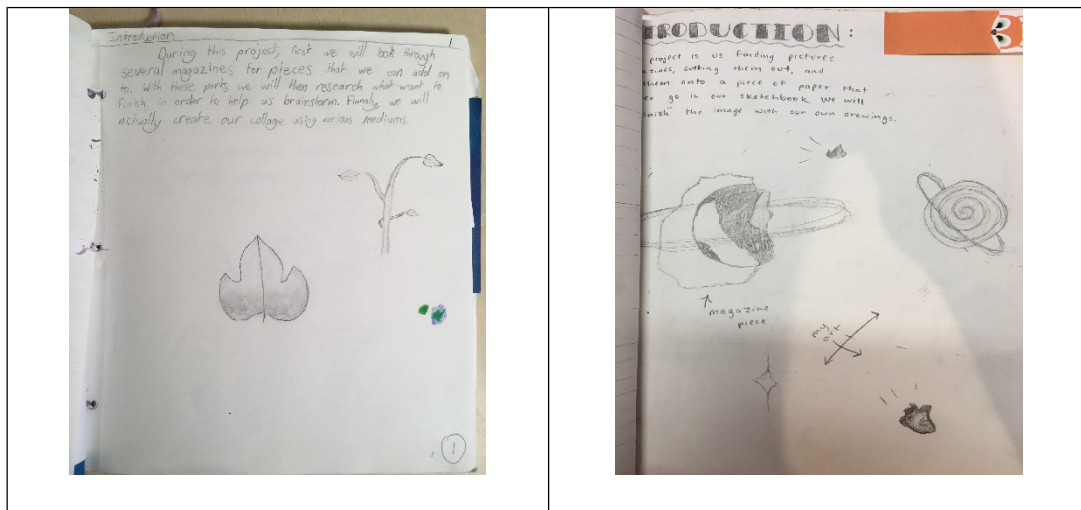


Figure 2. Introduction Page, Project One. KS (left) and TS (right).

CH and JR had widely different Introduction Pages. CH went into more detail than TS and KS about the project. She also elaborated on steps she would take toward the final project as well as layout the process of idea development. CH included a simple drawing of an initial thought she had about the project. JR's Introduction Page was extremely sparse and somewhat incoherent. I do not think JR was buying into the idea of a Workbook at all (see Figure 3).

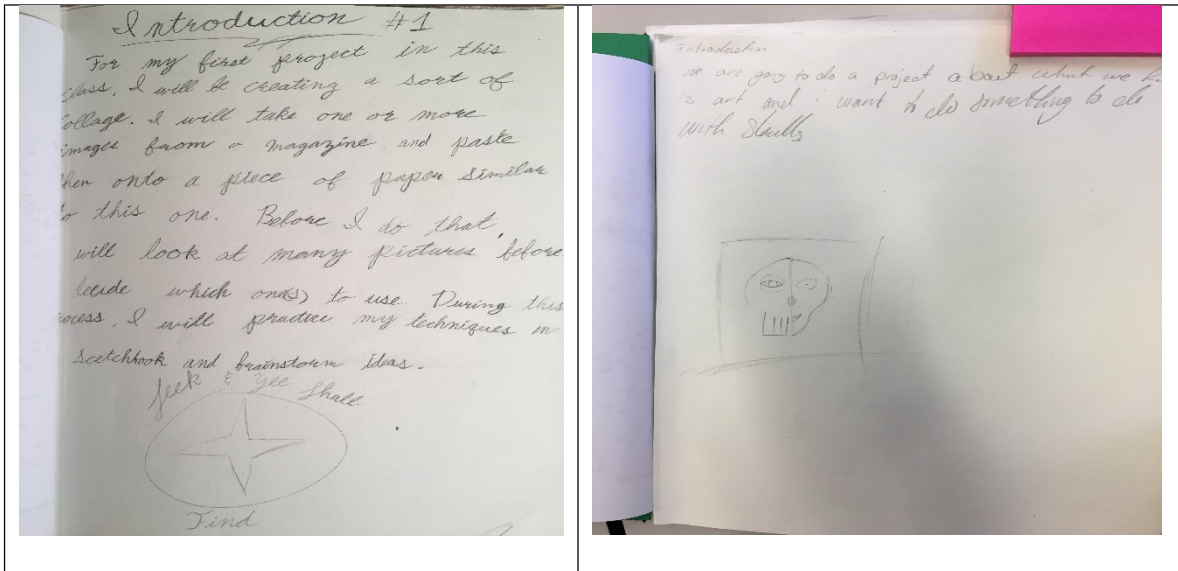


Figure 3. Introduction Page, Project One. CH (left) and JR (right).

### Project One: Brainstorming Page

Students were given directions and strategies for completing the Brainstorming Page in their workbooks. I had students take notes on four creative techniques they could choose from and modeled how to create a brainstorming web on the white board. As with the Introduction Page I asked students to balance sketching and writing on this page. Starting with a broad central idea I showed students how to narrow their ideas into specific areas for further research. I also discussed how creating a mind map could help lead to subjects or topics students may find new to them. Once students narrowed their subject down to a topic of focus they would then be able to research that subject and begin generating ideas for their final artwork using one of the creative techniques discussed in class.

Again KS showed minimal engagement in the Workbook. He took simple notes of the creative techniques discussed in class without elaboration. He also appeared to create a minimal brainstorming web without going into depth with any

of his topics. TS on the other hand went much further on the Brainstorming Page than she did on the previous workbook page. She added some of her own interpretation to the creative techniques and her brainstorming web evolved into a few questions that could be used to research ideas for her final artwork (see Figure 4). TS also added some images to this page that appear to directly connect to a train of thought.

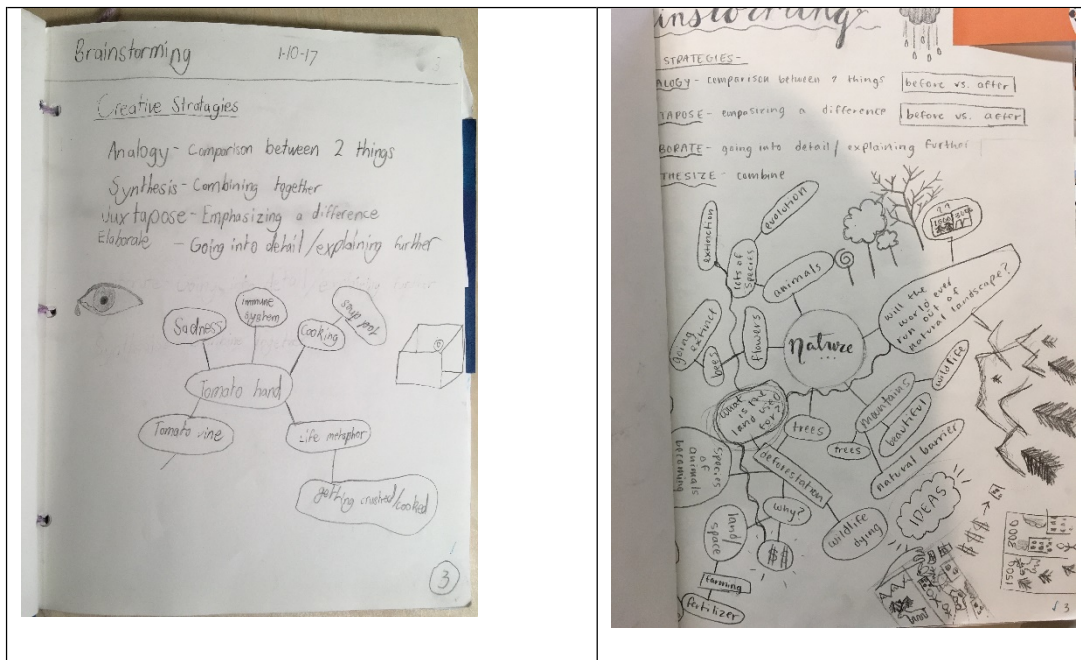


Figure 4. Brainstorming Page, Project One KS (left) and TS (right).

CH showed less engagement in the Brainstorming Page than she did in the previous Introduction Page. She took notes on the creative techniques without using her own words and did not extend beyond the minimum of note taking. Her brainstorming web also appears to be minimal in thought as it did not go deeply into any area or formulate any questions that would lead to further investigation.



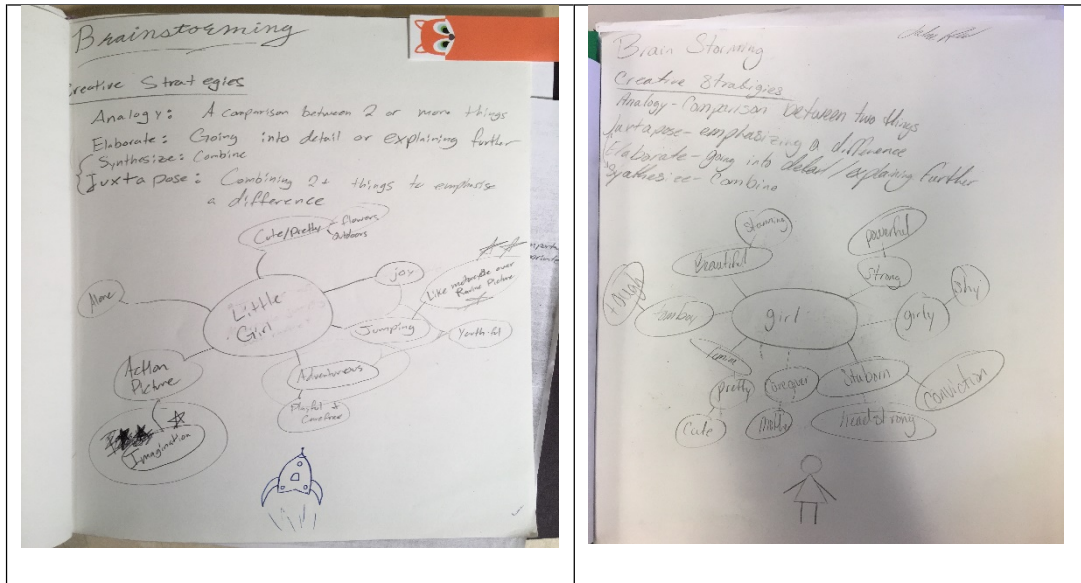


Figure 5. Brainstorming Page, Project One. CH (left) and JR (right).

### Project One: Research Page

The Research Page was introduced to students as the place to investigate ideas further and to make connections between their initial ideas and the information they found. By choosing a topic from the brainstorming exercise, students were then to inquire further into their topic. Students were required to cite sources and to demonstrate the knowledge they had gained through the research process.

KS did show a connection between the Research Page and a topic he created from the brainstorming activity, but did not demonstrate any inquiry into a topic. He simply chose to synthesize two images he found on the Internet into a final artwork. TS demonstrated deep inquiry into her topic of climate by sketching ideas and developing her original topic further through research (see Figure 5).

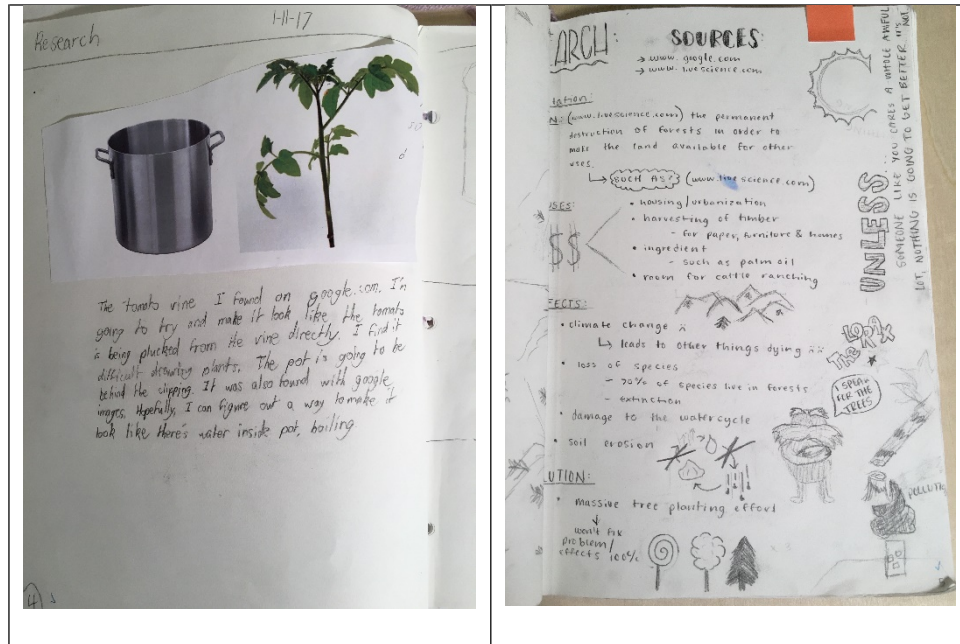


Figure 5. Project One, Research Page. KS (left) and TS (right).

Unfortunately neither CH nor JR completed the Research Page for this project. I was not surprised JR did not do any research. He had been fairly adamant about doing his own art that was not related to the topics we had discussed in class. However I was concerned CH did not complete the research section of the project. It is untypical of her to not follow through on portions of assignments. After speaking with her about the research she informed me she felt confident enough in her idea that she felt the research was something she could skip.

### Project One: Experimentation Page

The Experimentation Page is where students demonstrate skills in new mediums, techniques, and approaches to creating art. For this project I introduced three colored pencil techniques. Students were required to use at least one on their final artwork and were encouraged to research new colored pencil techniques on their own.

KS experimented with the three techniques demonstrated in class, however he did not annotate any of his experimenting with reflective notes. KS did demonstrate some problem solving through experimentation for the look of his final artwork. TS also experimented with the three techniques as well as add reflective notes to her work. She also developed techniques with the final artwork in mind (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. Project One, Experimentation Page. KS (left) and TS (right).

CH created a type of rough draft for her Experimentation Page, which included some color pencil experimentation. She created a few small areas of color to experiment with colors for her final draft. She did not try the three techniques demonstrated in class. JR's experimentation with colored pencils was fascinating. He was adamant about getting one of the techniques just right for a specific effect he was trying to create. But JR had no intention of using color pencil on his final artwork. I think he was excited to try new techniques but was still unwilling to follow the guidelines of the project (see Figure 7).

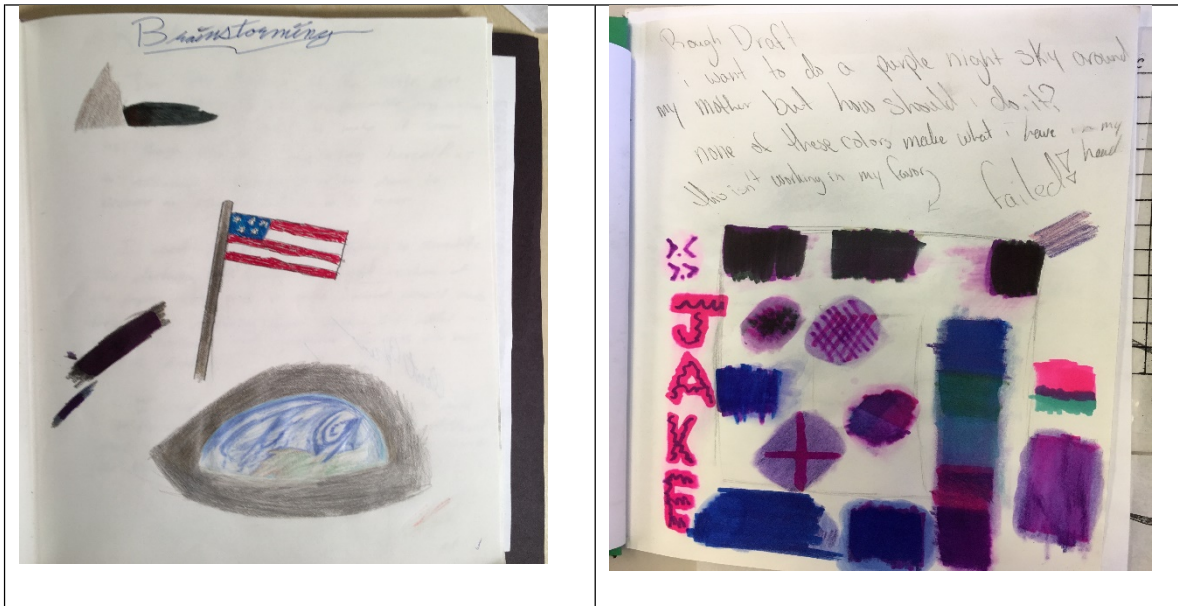


Figure 7. Project One, Experimentation Page. CH (left) and JR (right).

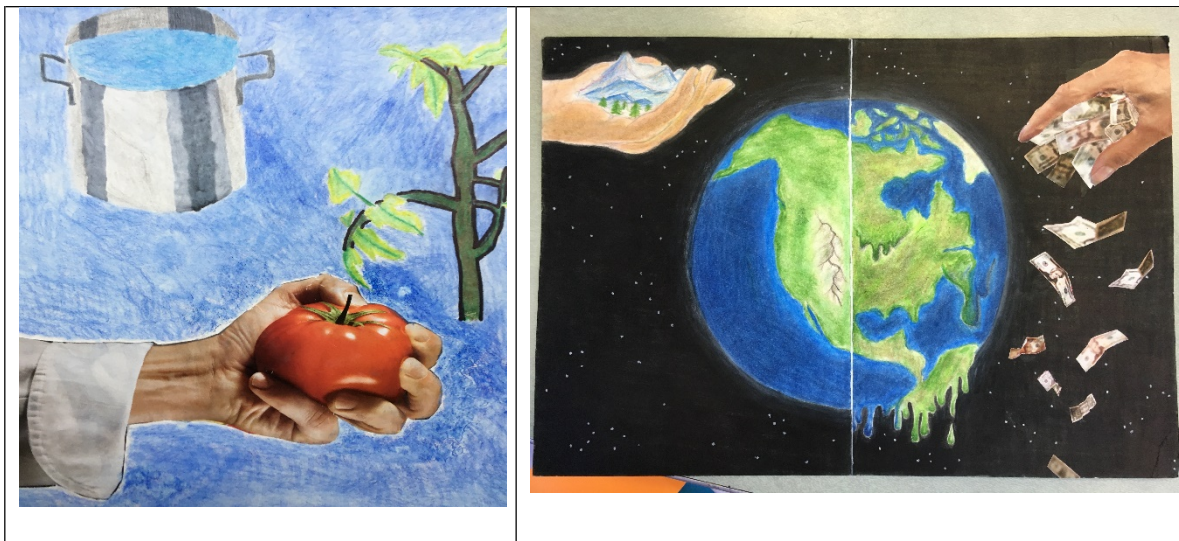
### Project One: Reflection Page and Final Artwork

For both the final artwork and the Reflection Page, I was looking for connections between the processes of research and the final work. I was also looking for creative work that demonstrates effective communication of the chosen topic. For the self-reflection I was looking for a self-evaluation of the final art as well as the entire process of making. I guided students through the evaluation process and encouraged students to include peer reviews of their art as well.

KS's final artwork demonstrated a connection between the minimal research he did in the workbook and also includes a narrative. KS used a hand holding a tomato apparently pulled from the drawn vine, which will be placed in the pot to cook. KS chose to elaborate on the image of the tomato to create a narrative. It is unknown from the workbook or his final artwork if his topic contains any deeper significance than the images represent (see Figure 8). For the Reflection Page, KS only included comments from his peers and did not do the self-evaluation of his work.



TS presented a strong relationship between her research and final artwork. She wanted to show her feelings about living in a society and balancing the effects of civilization with the environment. TS was also concerned with the priority money often takes over personal stewardship of our world. She also demonstrated an understanding of chosen techniques and communicated her topic effectively (see Figure 8). On her reflection page, TS wrote about several aspects of the process of researching and making art. Time management was a concern of hers and she expressed an enjoyment of the process of making the final art. TS also analyzed the effectiveness of her communication concerning her chosen topic as well as accomplishments in both medium and technique.

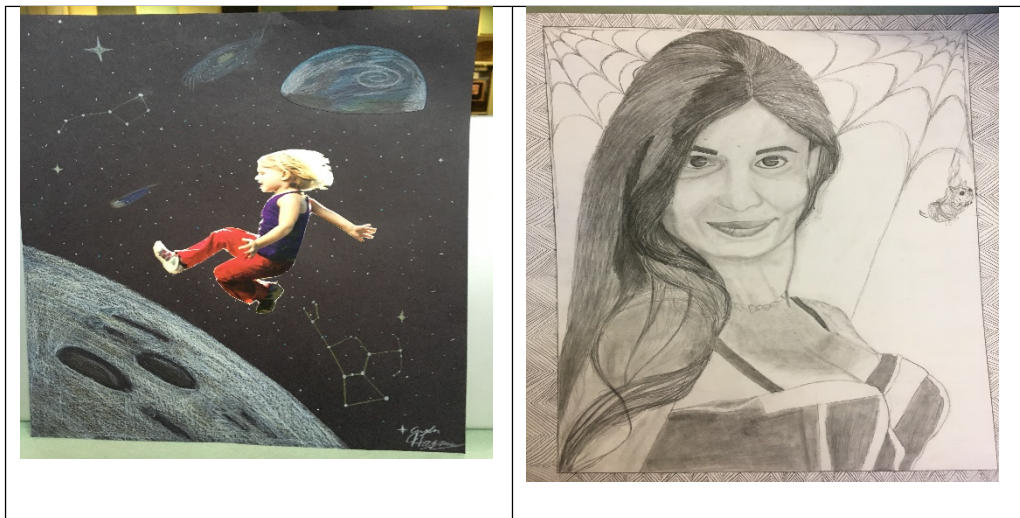


*Figure 8. Project One, Final Artwork. KS (left) and TS (right).*

For the final artwork CH created a piece that showed a direct connection between her research and finished art piece. Her topic was what she describes as “presumable imagination” in which a little girl imagines herself as an astronaut. She communicated this idea of childlike fantasy effectively and with the medium demonstrated an understanding of chosen techniques (see Figure 9). For her Reflection Page, CH described the final piece and explained the narrative, which

drove the imagery. She goes on to explain the choices she made of material and techniques and how each affected the image. The only thing CH did not cover, in her reflection, was a self-evaluation of her process and areas of accomplishment and improvement.

JR's final artwork was a surprise to me when he finally brought it in. It was a pencil drawing of his mother, which had very little to do with any of his research or the parameters of the project. After talking to him about the drawing he informed me he did the drawing of his mother because he wanted to. It is a good drawing and JR is very proud of the work he did (see Figure 9). Although JR did not complete a Reflection Page, he did express how important the drawing was to him. He wanted to create a pencil drawing of his mother, and augment center features that he felt would improve his mother's appearance. He stated that he made the breasts larger because he felt that was one area he could improve on.



*Figure 9. Final Artwork, Project One. CH (left) and JR (right).*

### **Project Two: Workbook, Introduction and Brainstorming Pages**

Project Two was designed to allow students more freedom of choice in their art making. The parameters of the project were for students to develop ideas and topics of inquiry through research and documentation in their workbooks and they



TS, as sincerely as possible, what she was thinking, she told me she was stuck. After some time TS and I came to the conclusion that she should move on from the brainstorming and begin the research part of the project in hopes she would “unstuck” herself.

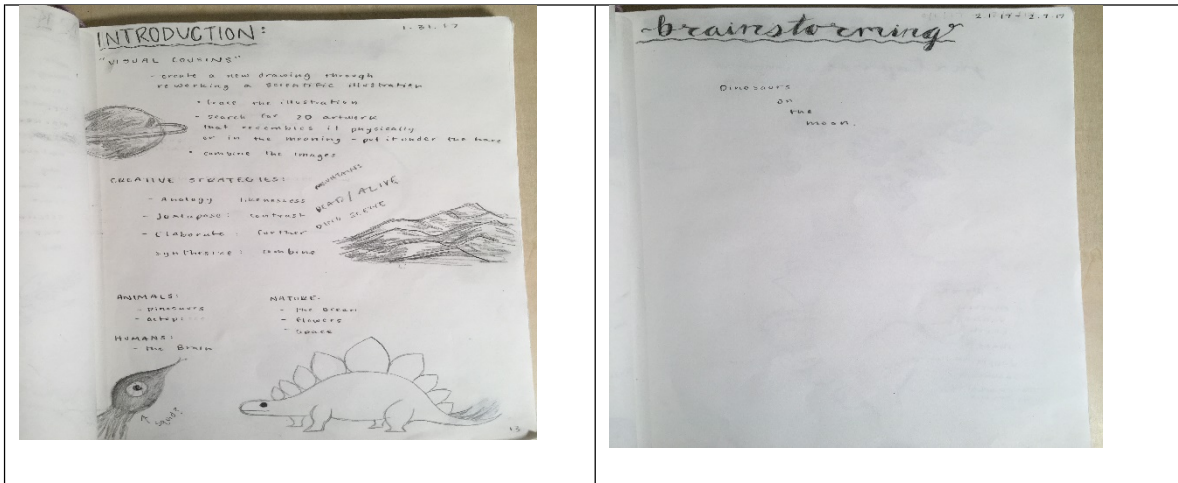


Figure 11. TS Introduction (left) and Brainstorm (right).

CH did not seem to put as much thought into her second Introduction Page. She only paraphrased my introduction and created an initial sketch. She did not go into details of the parameters of the project or elaborate on her ideas. The Brainstorming Page CH created was a rough draft of from the research she did. Unfortunately CH did not show how she came up with the idea or what her topic was (see Figure 12).

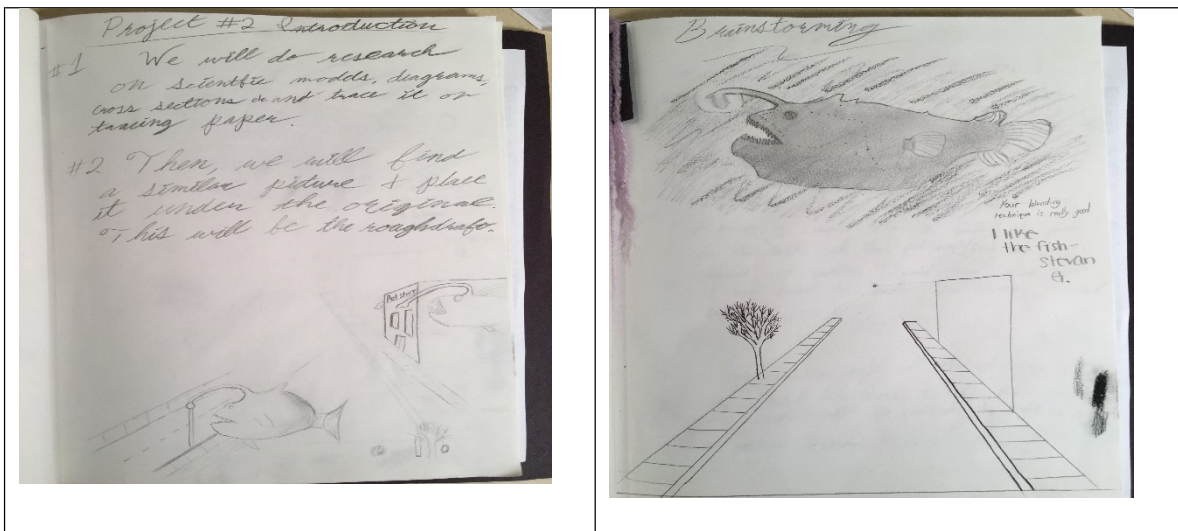


Figure 12. CH Introduction (left) and Brainstorming (right).



For JR's Introduction Page he stuck with his determination of doing what he wanted to in spite of my prodding to inquire into a topic to discover something to create. JR simply made a statement on his Introduction Page (see Figure 13). The Brainstorming Page appeared to be an appeasement to me by simply put something on the page. JR took the topic from his introduction and added only a few webs of thought. I spoke with JR about trying to see where a web of thought would lead him, but he dug his feet in and was adamant about doing what he wanted to do.

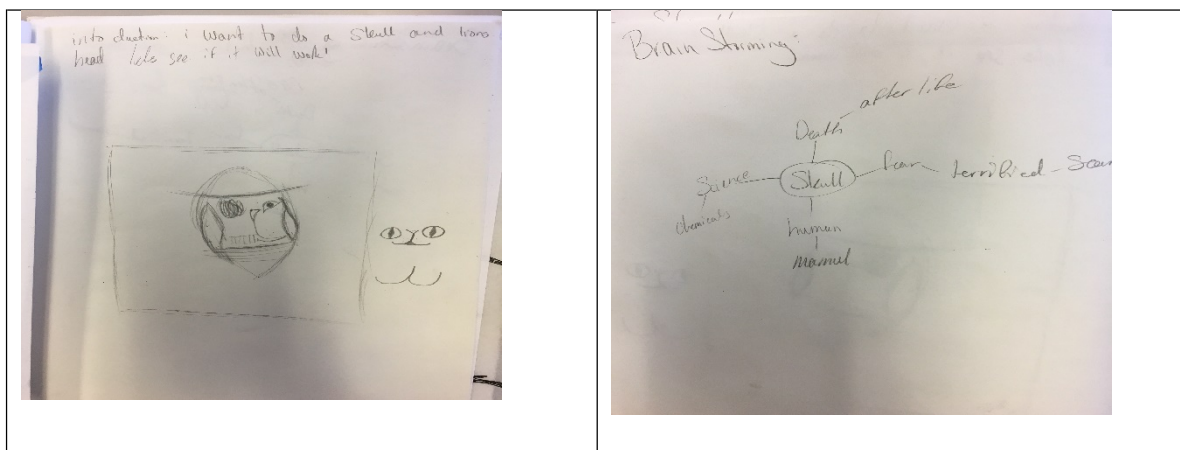


Figure 13. JR Introduction (left) and Brainstorming (right).

### **Project Two: Workbook, Research and Experimentation Pages**

The Research Page was introduced with an emphasis on discovering new information or new perspectives on topics students discovered from their brainstorming. I showed more examples of artists using research to discover ideas for their work than the first project, and focused more of my presentation on allowing students to research ideas. KS's Research Page demonstrated much deeper investigation into his chosen topic. He is genuinely interested in astrophysics and showed critical thought about his subject and images he chose to work with (see Figure 14). For his Experimentation Page KS chose media which were new to him. He experimented with techniques and reflected on the outcomes, as they would

relate to his final artwork. He demonstrated critical evaluations of his work and developed a plan accordingly (see Figure 14).

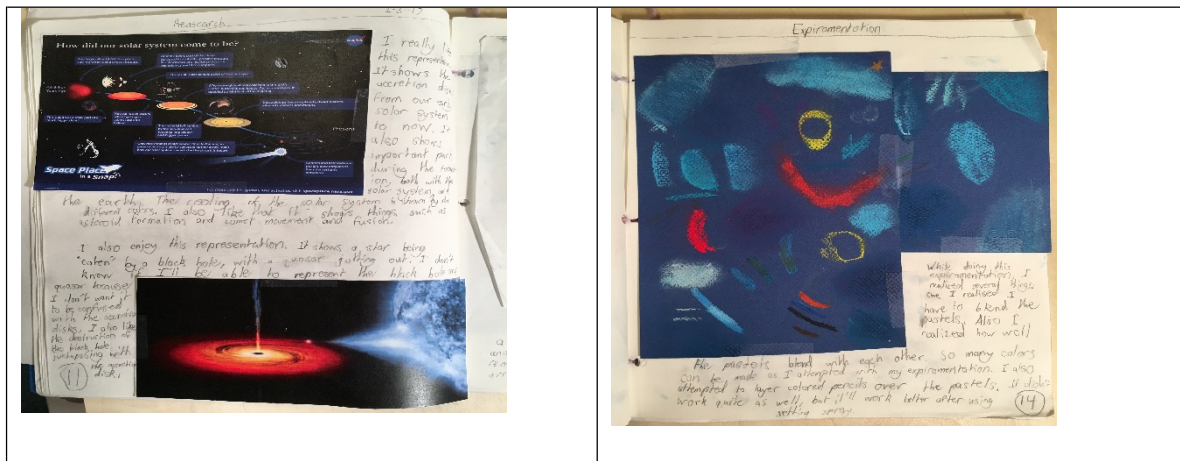


Figure 14. KS Research (left) and Experimentation (right).

For her Research Page, TS took her one idea from her brainstorming and synthesized her scientific illustration with a historic image she found. She created a rough draft of her final artwork and made a note about what materials to use (see Figure 15). Most of TS's brainstorming and research was done through verbal discussions with her classmate and myself. Her Experimentation Page shows a shift in the subject of her thinking about her final artwork. TS decided to synthesize a dinosaur with imagery of our solar system. She experimented with pastels to create the desired affect she was looking for and made notes reflecting on her work (see Figure 15).

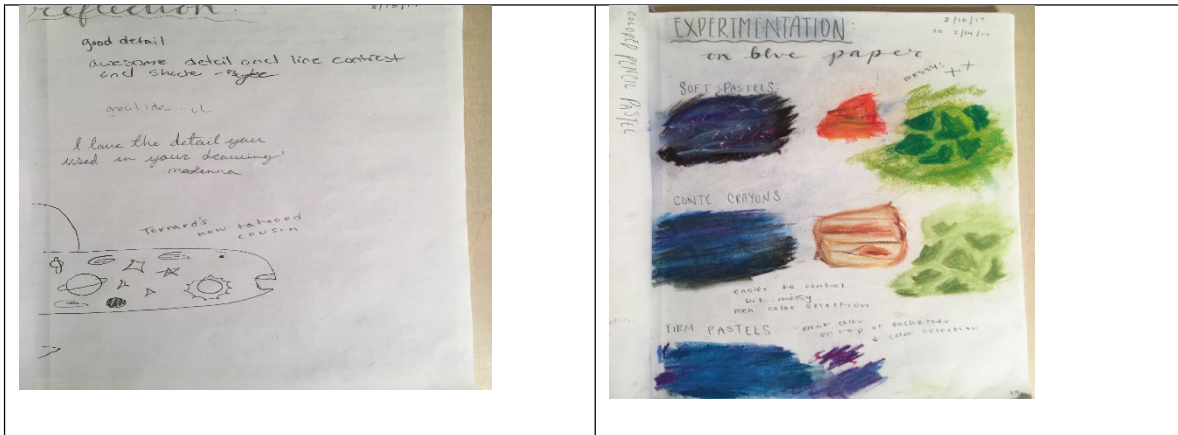


Figure 15. TS Research (left) and Experimentation (right).

CH did not complete either the Research Page or the Experimentation Page. She did an investigation about sea animals and combining that image with a juxtaposing scene. CH did not demonstrate any investigation into a topic, rather jumping from the brainstorming right into the final artwork.

JR did complete a Research Page for his second project. Although completing the Research Page was a huge improvement this time, JR did very little actual research. He simply took his initial idea and put together images to simulate research. JR did no real investigation into his topic (see Figure 16). For his Experimentation Page, JR expressed that he wanted to work with charcoal. I discussed a couple techniques he could investigate and showed him video demonstrations on charcoal methods. JR's experimenting consisted of sketching out a rough draft of his final and did not experiment with any techniques we discussed (see Figure 16).

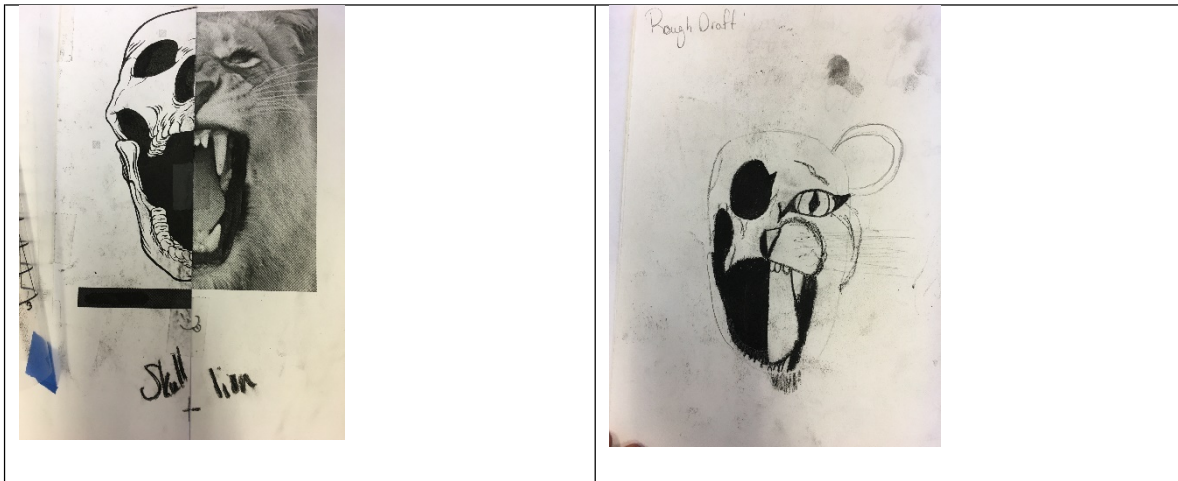


Figure 16. JR Research (left) and Experimentation (right).

### Project Two: Final Artwork and Reflection

For Project Two's Reflection Page I gave students a handout with prompts to help them think about ways to reflect about their work. When I gave students the handout I went through each prompt and discussed ways it may help them write and think about evaluating their process. Most students were very literal when responding to the prompts and did not add any more reflective thought than the prompt required. KS was no exception. He answered each prompt giving enough information to fulfill the prompts question (see Figure 17). He did however write about his technique, what he learned and what had surprised him about his work. His final art piece, *Accretion Disks* (see Figure 17), shows a continuous connection between his research and final art. KS was interested in the physics of the creation of our solar system. He was concerned with showing the unique qualities of accretion disks and how the colors signified different elements of development. He demonstrated what he learned from medium and technique and communicated his topic effectively. KS's entire process for this project was exactly what I was hoping for.

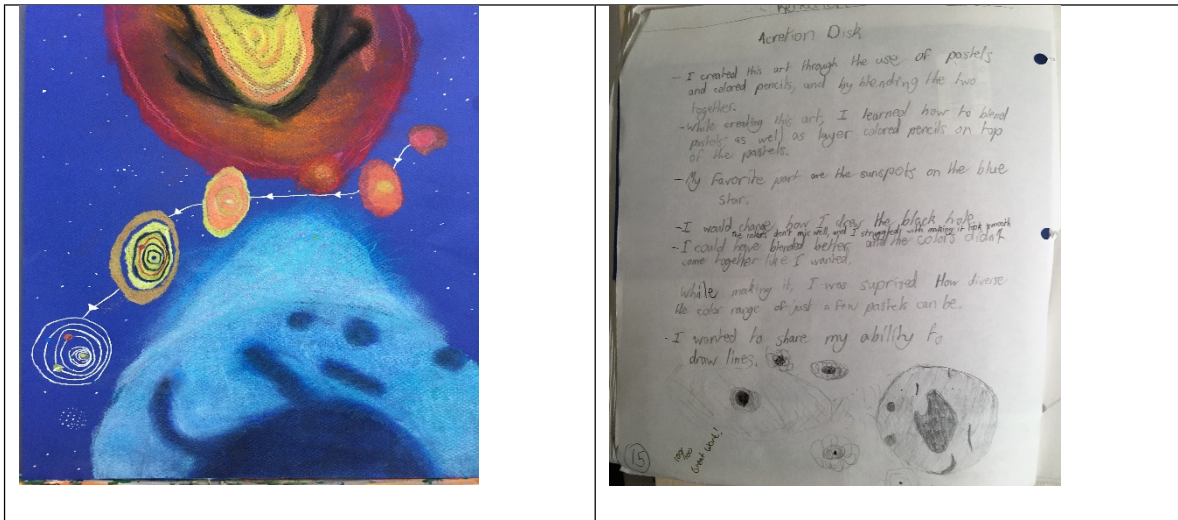


Figure 17. Project Two. KS Final Art (left) and Reflection (right).

TS followed the prompts much as everyone else in class did, but she went into more detail and elaborated on some of her thoughts. She wrote about her idea generation in a way that was missing from her workbook and went into detail about her chosen medium (see Figure 18). She also reflected on the knowledge she had gained from both the process of making the final artwork and how she came up with the idea for it. *Terrard the Space Dinosaur* was unfinished at the time of photographing due to TS's issue of perfectionism. (We have since moved on from perfectionism.) Her final artwork demonstrates everything she did in her workbook. TS wanted to connect two of her favorite subjects, dinosaurs and space. She used the plates on the dinosaurs back to represent the planets in our solar system. She created a name for her character, Terrard, and put a space helmet on him so he could be an astronaut. It is directly connected to her research and experimentation. She has also successfully communicated her subject (see Figure 18).



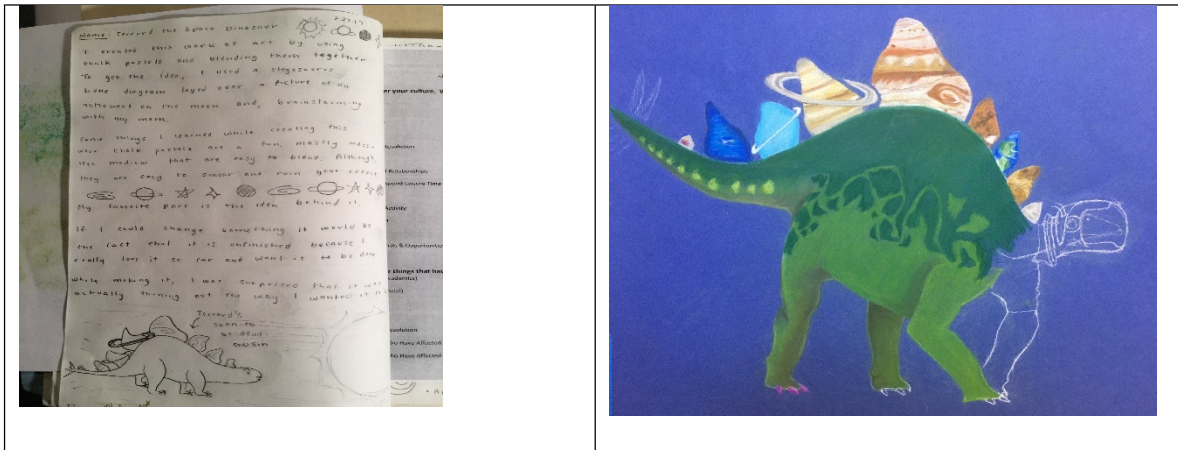


Figure 18. Project Two. TS Reflection (left) and Final Artwork (right).

CH stated in her Reflection Page (see Figure 19) that she enjoyed this project and was satisfied with the results of her final artwork. She explained that simplicity and lack of meaning for the reasons why she felt she had achieved her initial vision of the piece. CH also explained what she would change to improve her final piece; contradicting one of the reasons she listed as to why she felt successful. CH's self-reflection is fairly simple, much like her final artwork (Figure 19). Both lack an in-depth perspective into a topic and appear superficial. CH did demonstrate a connection between the investigations she did in her workbook and the final artwork, but she did not effectively communicate her topic. CH stated she wanted to create a simple city-scape with the fish juxtaposed on the side of a store. She also said she wanted the image to lack any meaning.

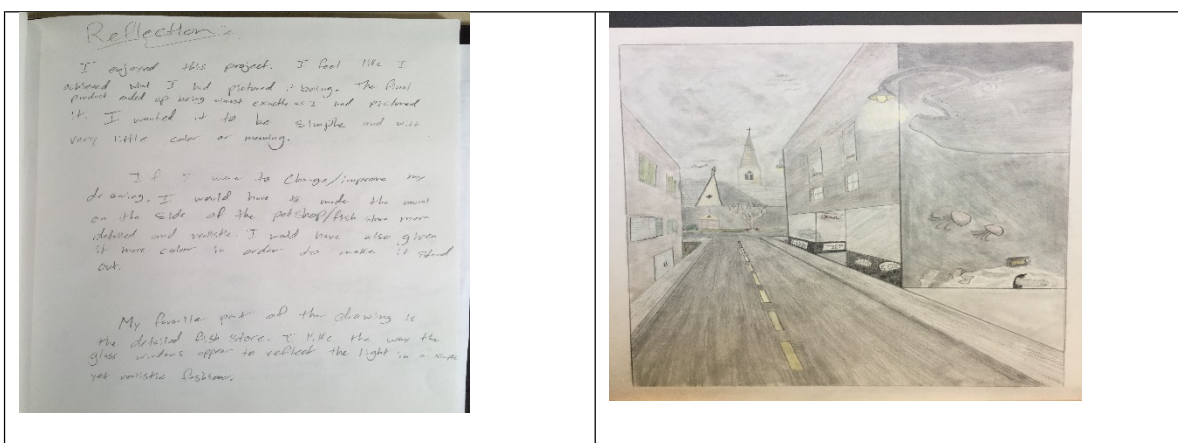


Figure 19. Project Two. CH Reflection (left) and Final Artwork (right).

After completing very minimal research for his artwork, JR became uninterested in his project shortly after. After several discussions with JR, trying to convince him to simply try or do something, JR decided he would just wait until the next project to start working again. This has become a pattern for JR in his other elective classes. His motivation is very low and he easily quits many of his projects.

### **Project Three, Workbook: Introduction and Brainstorming Pages**

The third project for my Drawing 2 class was an introduction to printmaking. Students were to make prints using the dry-point technique on small pieces of plexiglass and explore techniques to show form and value. The context of the assignment was similar to the first project. Students were asked to combine a historically iconic image with an image from their culture to create new meaning. For this project I did more front-loading of techniques and images to help students generate ideas. I felt it was important to give students as much information at the beginning of the project as I could since most students had no knowledge of printmaking.

TS's Introduction Page was similar to her two previous ones. She took the required notes, but this time did not elaborate on them. She did add a few doodles and sample etching techniques (see Figure 20). For her Brainstorming Page TS went right into an idea for her final artwork. She did not create a brainstorming web, rather seemed focused on the idea of combining old images with modern images of culture (see Figure 20).

For his Introduction Page KS took the required notes, which were more than previous introductions, but he did not elaborate. His notes were well organized and detailed but they did lack any initial thoughts or ideas about the current project (see Figure 21). He also did not include much in the way of sketching for this page. His Brainstorming Page has a fairly extensive web generated from his thoughts about his culture (see Figure 21). It was mostly political in nature but did seem to branch out into several related topics. However, KS did not include any investigation into the other part of the project theme. He simply wrote the word “iconic” with a bubble around it.

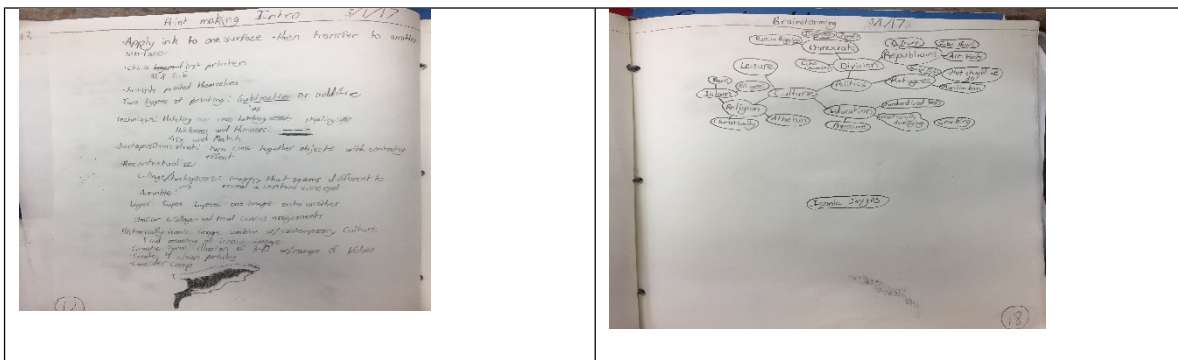


Figure 21. Project Three. KS Introduction (left) and Brainstorming (right).



CH's Introduction Page seemed to follow the same theme as the other students; she took the required notes but did not elaborate on any of the topics. CH also did not sketch any ideas or initial thoughts about the project (see Figure 22). For her Brainstorming Page CH again went straight to sketching out her idea for her final artwork. She did not demonstrate any branching out into topics or expansion on initial thoughts (see Figure 22).

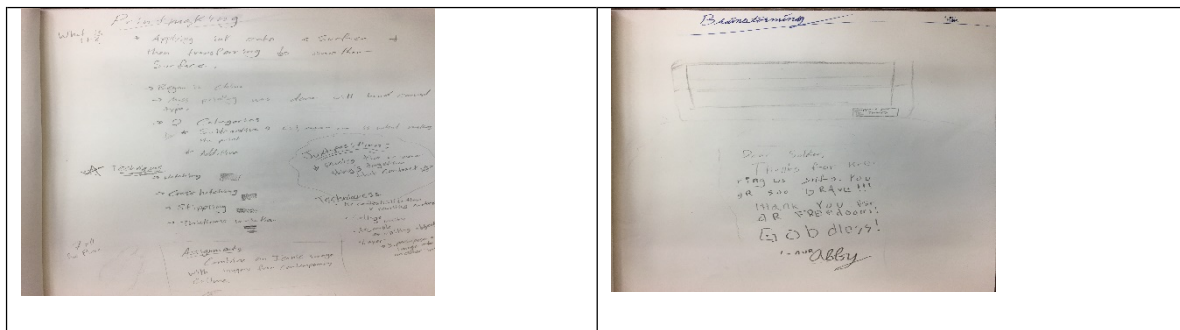


Figure 22. Project Three. CH Introduction (left) and Brainstorming (right).

JR appeared to be excited about this project and took some notes for his Introduction Page in his workbook (see Figure 23). He did not take all the required notes and did not elaborate or sketch any initial ideas about the project. Like KS on her Brainstorming Page, JR skipped the brainstorming part and went right into sketching out an idea for the final artwork (see Figure 23). This has been his pattern on the previous projects and after discussing this with him he is very reluctant to do any investigation into topics. Instead he relies on knowledge about topics he feels he already has.

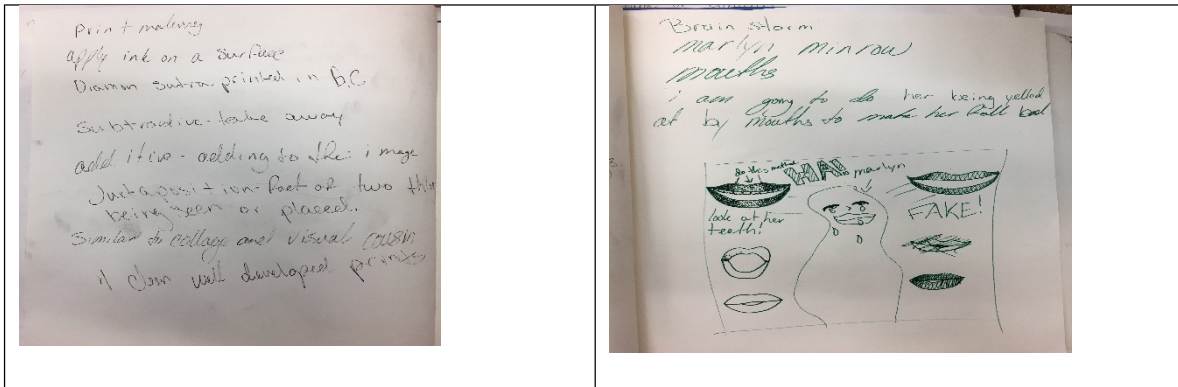


Figure 23. Project Three. JR Introduction (left) and Brainstorming (right).

### Project Three, Workbook: Research and Experimentation

For the research portion of the investigation into their chosen topics, I asked students to understand the meaning and the context of the iconic image they chose to work with. I also asked students to inquire into the culturally relevant image they chose to see if they could find a connection between the two images they were working with.

KS did not complete his Research Page, which was interesting because I did observe him doing research into his topic. KS also did the minimum on his Experimentation Page, only doing what was directly asked of students to do by myself (see Figure 24).

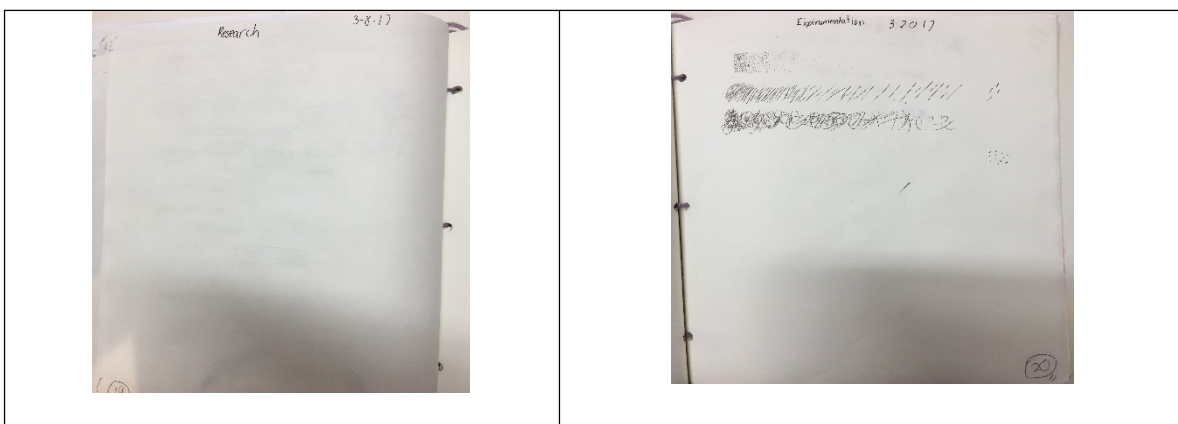


Figure 24. Project Three. KS Research (left) and Experimentation (right).

TS ended up working with two iconic images, one being the *Starry Night*, and the other the Eiffel Tower. Through her research she did find an interesting, although dark, connection. She discovered Vincent Van Gogh had apparently committed suicide and that the Eiffel Tower was infamous for dramatic suicides (see Figure 24). TS's Experimentation Page included some practicing of specific techniques as well as a rough draft with the techniques applied. She did add a few notes to her experimentation and a bit of her humor as well (see Figure 25).

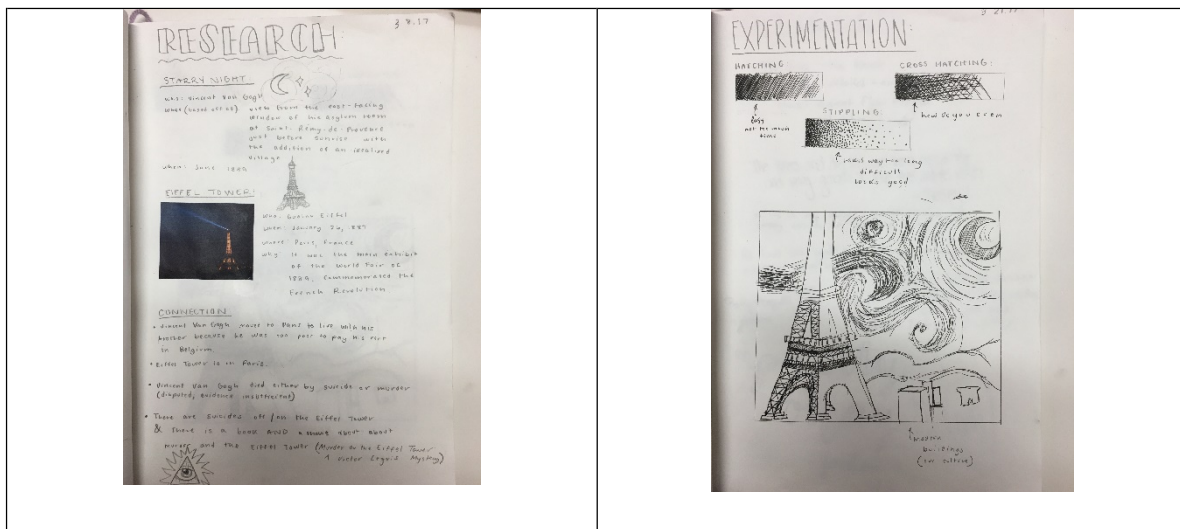


Figure 25. Project Three. TS Research (left) and Experimentation (right).

CH did her research on an iconic image she chose to work with. Her research demonstrated a fair investigation into the history of the image and that knowledge appears to be the source of her message (see Figure 26). She created a draft of her final and experimented with various hatching techniques. CH did not make comments about her experimentation on this page, but she verbally conveyed her evaluation of her process with me several times throughout her practice (see Figure 26).

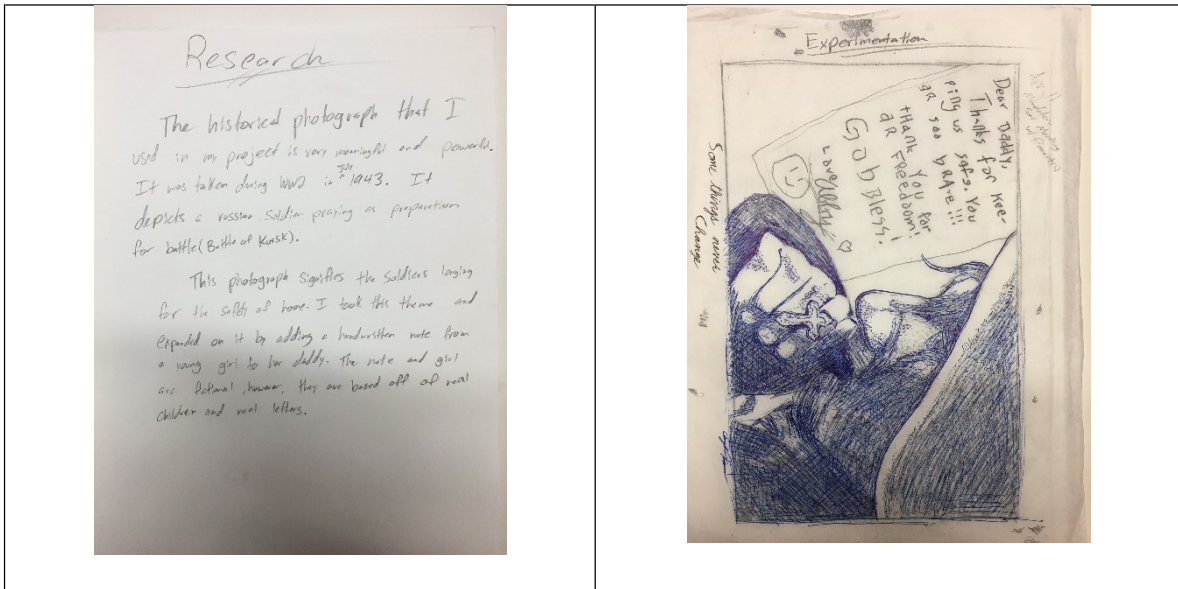


Figure 26. Project Three. CH Research (left) and Experimentation (right).

JR did not create a Research Page in his workbook. As he has demonstrated in the previous projects, JR does not feel research is a part of his art making process and in a passive aggressive manner made his point to me. He did however create somewhat of an Experimentation Page (see Figure 27). JR traced an iconic image and started practicing with pencil shading. After I explained to JR that pencil shading would not be possible with the tools we had, he reluctantly practiced some hurried hatching techniques.

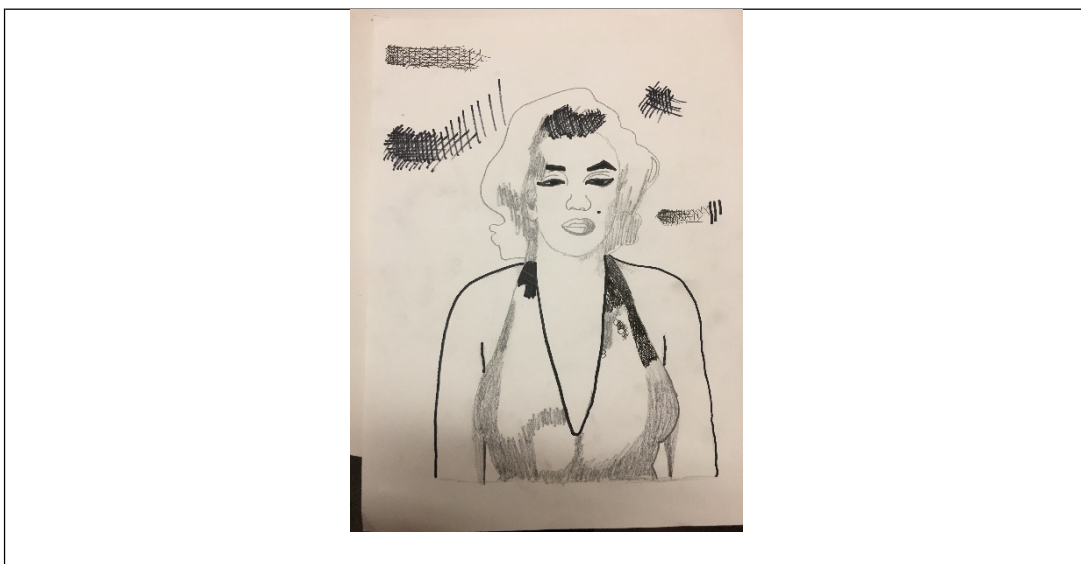


Figure 27. Project Three. JR Experimentation.

### Project Three. Workbook, Reflection and Final Artwork.

For this unit's reflection I re-emphasized the importance of reflecting on their artwork and the processes involved. I also went over a handout with prompts to help students with their reflections. I allowed most of a forty-eight minute class period for students to complete their Reflection Page. There were however several students who still needed to complete their last print during this time and did not have as much time as others to complete their Reflection Page. KS was one of those students. Although KS rushed to complete his Reflection page, he was fairly articulate in describing the message and idea behind his artwork (see Figure 28). He describes the impact of fake news in current media and how it influences our culture. He switched the flag on the moon landing to a Russian flag to demonstrate how easy it is to make people believe false history. KS also included comments from a class critique, one in which he forgot to bring his artwork for. The final artwork KS created demonstrates a direct connection between his research and his intended message of fake news (see Figure 28). Although the final piece is not technically strong, KS has demonstrated an understanding of the medium and ability to communicate ideas through visual art.

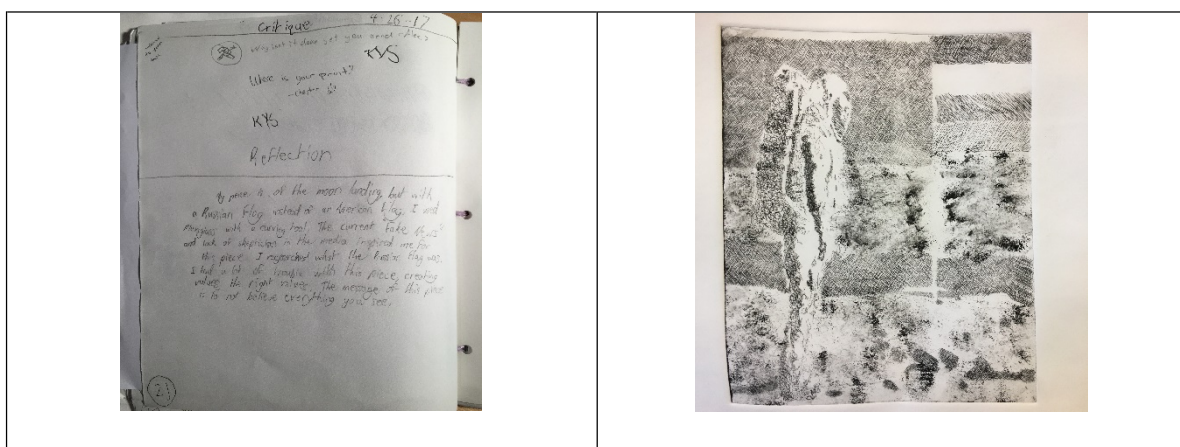


Figure 28. Project Three. KS Reflection (left) and Artwork (right).

TS went into detail about her process and the idea behind her artwork in her Reflection Page. She wrote about her process of discovery and how the images she



choses are connected through suicide. Van Gogh died of an apparent suicide and the Eiffel Tower has a history of tragic deaths from people jumping from the observation deck. She also described her challenges with this project and how she overcame them, adding a bit of her dry humor as well. TS described a fluid process from inception to final outcome in her reflection, noting important instances in her learning (see Figure 29). Her final artwork demonstrates all the processes of discovery from her research. Technically she shows an understanding of medium and was effective in communicating her topic (see Figure 29).

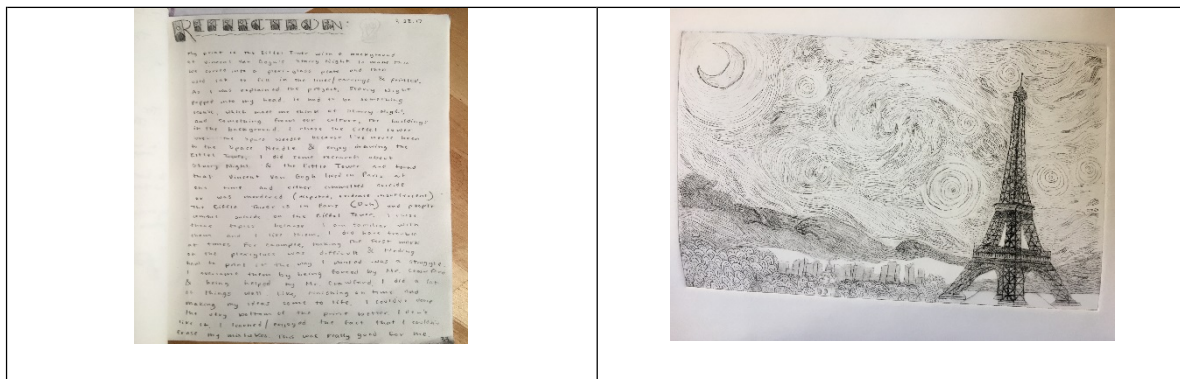
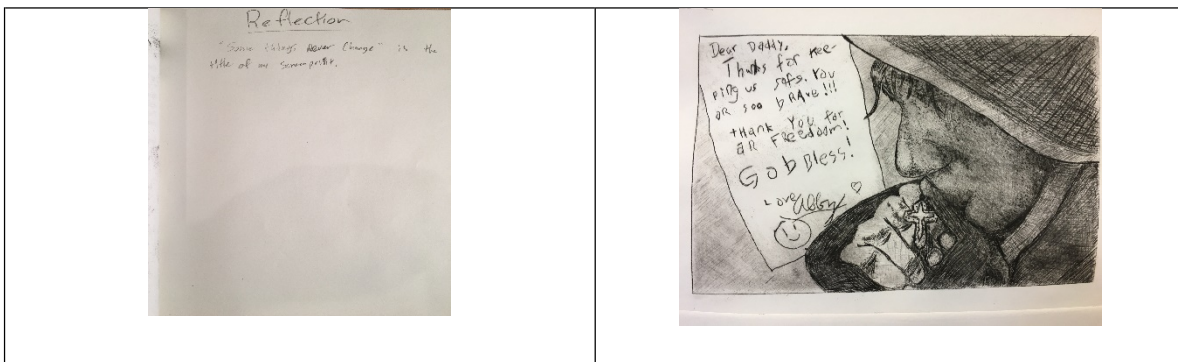


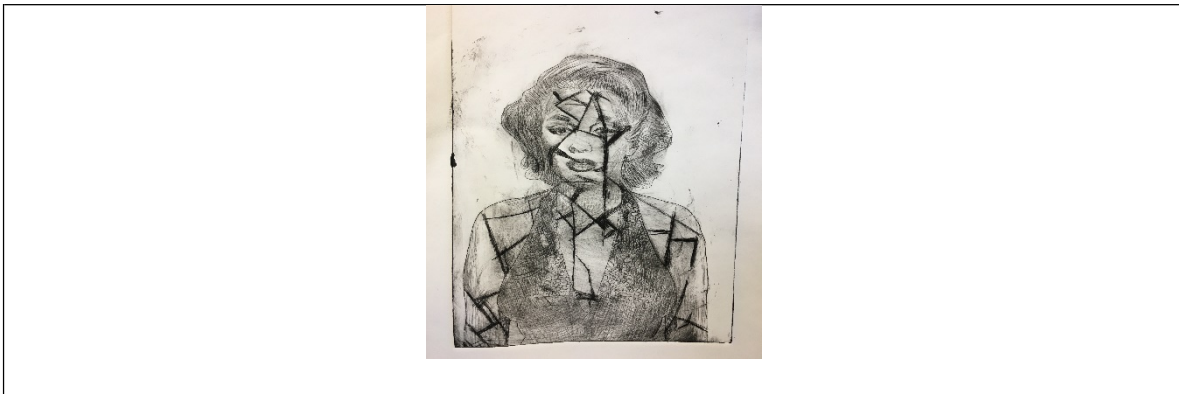
Figure 29. Project Three. TS Reflection (left) and Artwork (left).

CH is a senior and was suffering from an extreme case of “senioritis” when it was time to complete the Reflection Page. When I inquired about her lack of effort on her reflection she confidently told me she was extremely satisfied with her final artwork and did not feel she would gain any new knowledge from reflecting on her process. For her reflection CH simply stated the title she had given her piece (see Figure 30). Her final piece does show a connection to the minimal research she did in her workbook. When I asked CH about the meaning of her piece she stated it was about how children still send letters to their parents who are serving in the military. The originality of the work is not as strong as I had hoped, but she did clearly communicate her idea (see Figure 30).



*Figure 30. Project Three. CH Reflection (left) and Artwork (right).*

JR did not complete the Reflection Page for the third unit. Unlike other students who were rushed to finish, JR simply decided not to do it. When I asked JR about his decision, he only shrugged and redirected the conversation away from the Reflection Page. JR's final artwork does show a connection between the research he did do (see Figure 31). He demonstrated a minimal understanding of the medium and attempted to communicate his topic. JR was very spontaneous with his ideas for this project and was not open to feedback during the entire process. However he was adamant about his topic and stuck with it throughout his process. JR wanted to communicate how societal pressure was and is still present. He Chose Marylin Monroe because she represented a strong intelligent woman who was under enormous pressure to fit an ideal. The cracks on her face represent a mirror and how the pressure to fit in often leads to cracks.



*Figure 31. Project Three. JR Final Artwork.*

### **Post-Advanced Art Survey**

The questions for the post-survey were the same as the pre-survey I gave at

the beginning of the semester (see Figure 1). I was curious to see if students responded differently or had gained any personal insight on how other artists generated artworks. KS's responses were almost identical to the first survey. The only notable difference was his response to question three, how do artists turn an idea into a piece of art? On the post-survey, KS described a process of idea generation and experimentation to the formation of the artwork. Similarly, TS's responses were almost the same as in her pre-survey except for question three. Here too she describes a process of creation that is more detailed than in her previous response. CH and JR both completed the post survey without notable differences in response. I do not believe either student thought deeply about the questions on the surveys.

### **Identifying Trends**

Identifying trends in the data was important for me to discover where my students were most engaged in each unit and where I need to reflect on my practice. Identifying trends was also important to help me move forward with my initial question of this study and to formulate new ones.

I looked for trends in six points of data collected from the different sections of students' workbooks and their final artworks. I averaged each student's scores across the three projects conducted for this study, to gain an overall impression of engagement for each section of the units. I then took an average of students' combined score and assigned that number to each section of the workbook and final artwork to gain insight as to where students seemed to put the most effort. The overall averages from the five sections of students' workbooks and students' final artwork indicate where students were most engaged. Not surprisingly, students were most engaged in their final artwork. What was surprising was that students appeared to be least engaged in the research aspect of each project. It appears that the level of engagement



increased as students were directly working on the visual aspects of their artwork.

The experimentation was the second highest level of engagement, followed by; introduction, brainstorming, reflection, and the lowest average being research.

### **Introduction Page**

Across the three units the Introduction Page showed little change. All four students approached the page with fairly the same results over time. KS was the most consistent. He demonstrated minimal elaboration on the required notes and only included one or two simple sketches on each page. TS showed the most improvement over time. Her elaborations become more in-depth and she include more initial thoughts and sketches in units two and three. CH somewhat declined on her Introduction Pages. They became much simpler and contained fewer sketches. JR did not complete the first two Introduction Pages, but he did show minimal effort on the third. He took some notes from the lecture but did not demonstrate the level of engagement I had hoped for. Overall the Introduction Page did not accomplish what I had intended it too. I had hoped students would put my presentation of the unit into their own words and begin to develop ideas about the unit through images and words.

Introduction Page: Score out of 25 points Overall Average: 74				
Student	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3	Average
KS	18	18	18	18
TS	18	25	25	23
CH	20	18	18	19
JR	14	14	14	14

**Table 2.** Student Scores for Information Page

### **Brainstorming**

The Brainstorming Page was one of the most important pages to help students develop ideas and expand upon their initial thoughts. My hope was to get students engaged in topics they discovered for themselves and allow them to find

their own motivation for making art. As a whole the Brainstorming Page did not meet my expectations. Students did not expand upon their initial ideas as much as I had hoped. KS showed the most improvement from his first Brainstorming Page. In his second and third pages, KS expanded his ideas in to topics he was familiar with and curious about. Astronomy is one of KS's favorite subjects and when he began investigating topics about space he began to expand and investigate more deeply. The other three students did not demonstrate any significant changes in their approach to brainstorming.

Brainstorming Page: Score out of 25 Points Overall Average: 71				
Student	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3	Average
KS	20	22	25	22
TS	25	0	25	17
CH	20	14	14	16
JR	20	13	16	16

**Table 3.** Student scores for Brainstorming Page

### Research Page

The Research Page revealed a similar pattern to the previous workbook pages. The students who were successful on the previous pages, TS and KS, demonstrated the same proficiency throughout all the pages in their workbooks. Similarly the students who underperformed on the previous pages, CH and JR, did the same on the Research Pages. My intention for the research section of each unit was for students to discover new knowledge, either in the topic the chose to investigate or the medium they chose to work with. I am beginning to question the purpose of the Research Page, or my presentation of it, as it seems to be an afterthought for most students.

Research Page: Score out of 25 Points Overall Average: 60				
Student	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3	Average
KS	18	25	0	14
TS	25	25	25	25
CH	0	0	25	8

JR	0	20	19	13
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**Table 4.** Student scores for Research Page**Experimentation Page**

The Experimentation Page was fairly consistent with scores to indicate engagement by students.

Experimentation Page: Score out of 25 Points Overall Average: 80				
Student	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3	Average
KS	18	25	10	18
TS	25	25	25	25
CH	16	0	25	14
JR	25	18	25	23

**Table 5.** Student Scores for Experimentation Page**Reflection Page**

The Reflection Page was also similar in performance to the previous pages. TS and KS, who have historically demonstrated proficiency in their workbook, performed very much the same on their reflections. CH seemed to do the minimum for all her pages and the Reflection Page was no different. JR was not interested in reflecting on his practice and did not attempt any of the Reflection Pages. With only a few exceptions, most students did not meet expectations for the Reflection Page.

Reflection Page: Score out of 25 Points Overall Average: 63				
Student	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3	Average
KS	13	25	25	21
TS	25	25	25	25
CH	25	25	0	17
JR	0	0	0	0

**Table 6.** Student Scores for Reflection Page**Final Artwork**

The final artwork produced by each student was the strongest part of each unit. The overall average score of the students' final artwork clearly shows a higher level of engagement than any other area of each unit. The only exception was

JR who did not do an artwork for his second project, but the two he did complete showed a fairly high level of engagement and time commitment.

Final Artwork: Score out of 100 Points Overall Average: 88				
Student	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3	Average
KS	100	100	100	100
TS	100	100	100	100
CH	100	100	100	100
JR	80	0	80	53

**Table 7.** Student Scores for Final Artwork

### Conclusions from Data

The overarching goal for this research was to determine if conducting research as a part of the curriculum for each unit would result in more autonomous art from my students. I can say that the art, students made during this study, was overall genuinely authentic and original. However I am uncertain if it was the research or the workbooks that lead students towards creating original art pieces. My perception is that by giving students the autonomy to make their own art, they became personally invested in their creations. A significant aspect of this study was creating a more student-centered learning environment. I feel that shift from teacher-directed instruction had a larger impact on student autonomy then using arts-based research as part of the curriculum. The artwork students produced was extremely diverse and demonstrated a higher level of engagement then I have witnessed in previous classes I have taught. Although some of the subject matter was somewhat cliché, each art piece was unique and reflected the ideas of each individual.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS**

The reason I chose to become an art teacher was to be in an art studio surrounded by what invigorates me and keeps me excited about making my own art. I want to share my excitement of discovery with young artists and be part of an environment of discovery, collaboration, and art making. The last few years of teaching have not been the reason I became an art teacher. My teaching had become a predictable task in dispensing information and assessing the outcomes of predetermined projects. The shift I have experienced in beginning the process of relinquishing the control of what my students learn in the classroom to my student has been enlightening. My experience with this study has reinvigorated my values as a teacher and as an artist. It has turned the mundane, predictable schedule of lesson plans and instruction of each semester into a much more exciting and engaging experience not only for my students, but myself as well. My initial question of how and if conducting arts-based research as a part of my curriculum can help students create more autonomy in the classroom has not necessarily been answered, but I do feel I am moving in the right direction and have a more clear sense of the questions I need to ask.

## **Research Workbooks**

I employed the use of research workbooks as a tool to help students conduct research and document the processes involved in creating an original artwork. The structure of the workbooks was intended to give student tools and resources and enlighten the process to which art can be made. However many students did not buy into the idea of completing the five different sections for each unit. Student engagement was clearly focused on the production of their artwork as opposed to what many students felt was unnecessary busy work. Many students had formed fairly concrete ideas about what they wanted to create for the units during my presentations of the introduction and were eager to begin the final stage of the process, skipping the middle parts I felt were so crucial to the process. The goal was to show students how they could use research to generate new ideas that they were personally interested in and create original art from that research. I do feel strongly for the majority of students the artwork created during this study did indeed demonstrate much more autonomy than previous semesters.

## **Implications of Pedagogy**

In my attempt to shift my classroom from a teacher-centered to a student-centered one has generated more questions about my practice than has been answered. A couple of those questions are about what truly engages students in the art classroom and what does it actually mean, to me, to have a curriculum that is student-centered? How do I move forward with the knowledge I have acquired through this study to promote creative, critical, and individual thinking in my classes?

As far as what engages students during all the different sections of each unit was clear. Students were absorbed in making their own art and the processes that, for them, showed a direct connection to the visual end result of their work. By letting students choose the subject matter for their art, the medium they worked with, and the way they rendered their work, allowed students to reach a higher level of ownership than they would have if I had dictated the art they made. I feel that since the outcome of their work was based almost solely on the effort they put into their work, students felt more compelled to make decisions based on their own intrinsic motivations. The artwork created during this study has shown more individual thought and originality than any other class I have taught throughout my career. But I do not believe I have fully embraced the practice of relinquishing control of learning to my students.

While the structure of the workbook helps students have clear expectations towards their goals, I believe it was still too much of a teacher-controlled part of the process. I feel many students did not view all five different sections of the workbook as a part of their final art. I also feel that allowing more flexibility to the structure of the different sections of the workbook may help students approach the process of research in ways that they feel are more relevant to them and their art making. Finding the balance between student-choice and expectations is tricky for me. I do have a much better idea of how to move forward and continue to create a student-centered art room that promotes rigor and relevance in the future.

Moving forward with my desire to create an environment that honors and fosters creativity, I will continue to examine how I can improve my practice to help

students grow as artists. I still believe research is an extremely useful tool to help students discover new information or to gain a different perspective on familiar topics. However I feel I need to adapt how I present research to students in a way that makes it more relevant and integrated into the art students want to create. My view of research during this study was fairly rigid and a more flexible idea of what research is may be the key. I also feel that giving students more choice and control over how they document the different processes of research in their workbook will engage students more.

Finding the balance between a student-centered classroom and still maintaining a rigorous curriculum has become my question moving forward with this research. Giving students a voice in my class has shown me where students truly engage and learn. How I can change my practice to facilitate more authentic choices by my students is my new big question.



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**APPENDIX A**

**WORKBOOK AND FINAL ARTWORK RUBRIC**

<b>Student name:</b>		<b>Work Book and Art Rubric</b>		
<b>Introduction Page</b>	<b>Advanced 20 points</b>	<b>Proficient 15 points</b>	<b>Partially Proficient 10 points</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory 5C0 points</b>
Elaborated upon introduction of unit. Notes taken of requirements and theme topics. Sketches of initial ideas and/or brainstorming ideas.				
<b>Brainstorming Page</b>				
Brainstorming shows the development of ideas and expansion of initial thoughts. Demonstrates an in-depth investigation into a theme, topic, and or subject.				
<b>Research Page</b>				
Demonstrates student's independent contextual, visual, and critical investigation into chosen interest. Good balance between written and visual material. Uses an appropriate range of sources and cites sources.				
<b>Experimentation Page</b>				
Demonstrates an appropriate range of experimentation of medium and skill development. Written reflection on experimentation shows a process of self-evaluation.				
<b>Reflection Page</b>				
Reflection shows an in-depth evaluation of final artwork and steps leading towards its creation. Includes description of medium used, techniques, and personal experience.				
<b>Final Art Work</b>	<b>100C90 points</b>	<b>89C79 points</b>	<b>78C70 points</b>	<b>69C0 points</b>
Presents a close relationship between research and final artwork. Demonstrates an understanding of chosen medium. Artwork is creative and demonstrates effective communication of topic.				

**APPENDIX B**  
**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL**



*Institutional Review Board*

DATE: January 20, 2017

TO: Matthew Crawford

FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [976193-4] Inquiry Based Art Research and the Development of Artistic Autonomy in the High School Setting

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: January 20, 2017

EXPIRATION DATE: January 20, 2018

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB has APPROVED your submission. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of January 20, 2018.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or [Sherry.May@unco.edu](mailto:Sherry.May@unco.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

**APPENDIX C****PRE AND POST- ADVANCED ART SURVEY**

### Advanced Art Survey

Please respond to the following questions thoughtfully and in complete sentences.

1. How do visual artists come up with ideas for their artwork?
2. Where do artists look for inspiration?
3. How do artists turn an idea into a piece of art?
4. Why do artists keep sketchbooks?